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SUBJECT: FADHILA PARTY MEMBER: UIC 555 FOLLOWERS CRITICAL  
OF SUNNI ARABS, KURDS

REF: BAGHDAD 648

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT S. FORD FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) A  
ND (D)

11. (C) In a March 1 meeting held as a follow-on to reftel conversation, Fadhila Party Council of Representatives member Mohammed Ismail al-Kusai said that he believes the worst of the sectarian strife resulting from bombing of the Al-Askariyah Shrine in Samarra is over. He repeated reftel cautions that another such attack could cause the anger in the Shia street to boil over. He added that many UIC 555 followers are angry with Sunni Arab clerics who "are not telling their followers how to properly behave," and therefore are stirring up more anger. Al-Kusai said he fears the Shia would drive many Sunni Arabs out of Baghdad if another catastrophic attack occurred. He said this move would most likely spark a civil war.

12. (C) Because many Shia are resentful, al-Kusai predicted that many Shia imams would have harsh words for Sunni Arabs and Kurds during Friday prayers on March 3. The Sunni Arabs would be blamed for the Al-Askariyah attack and the resulting sectarian strife, and the Kurds would be blamed for trying to weaken UIC 555 by forming a separate coalition with Sunni Arabs and former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi. Another point of contention, al-Kusai said, is the National Security Council. The plan favored by Kurdistan Democratic Party leader Masoud Barzani would create a powerful body that is unelected. This would "violate the rules of democracy," al-Kusai said. UIC 555, al-Kusai said, would like to see the National Security Council be an advisory body only. Al-Kusai claimed that many UIC 555 supporters see the Kurds as perfidious and antidemocratic for the reasons mentioned above.  
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